



**Information Paper:**  
**“Proteus; New Insights for a New Age”**

**Background.** Proteus was a being from Greek mythology: Proteus, the son of Oceanus and Tethys was endowed with a capacity to assume different forms and to prophesy. The Proteus project originated as an advanced concepts research initiative at the U.S. National Reconnaissance Office in 1999, employing commercially proven scenario-based methodology. In the course of exploring alternate future scenarios and considering possible national security issues, the project team published interim results of the work in a book: “Proteus Insights from 2020”.

The book contains the original nine “insights” and five “planes of influence” that were derived from examining five “future hypothetical scenarios” A tenth Insight was drawn from reflections of the aftermath of 9/11 in recognition that the geo-strategic landscape had and will continue to become a rapidly changing and extraordinarily diverse and complex place requiring new and innovative approaches to intelligence collection, analysis decision making to identify discreet threats and seize opportunities in order to gain foresight to prevent strategic surprise. The book has been used as a basis to enable further strategic research and has inspired the initiative of the Proteus Consortium.

**The Proteus Management Group (PMG).** The PMG, established in October 2005, is a resident project at the Center for Strategic Leadership. The project is sponsored by the Office of the Director, National Intelligence primarily to promote further discourse, study and research on the application of Proteus Insights (PI) to strategic issues; focusing on the refinement, continued development and use of the Proteus lenses in future complex geo-strategic scenarios enabled by the global information grid and advanced technologies. The Group is also closely associated with Proteus Canada, a parallel effort.

Its second objective is to assist strategic and high-operational level decision makers, planners and intelligence analysts in coping with uncertainty, enhancing creativity, gaining foresight, and developing critical analytical and decision making processes to effectively provide insight and knowledge to future complex national security, military and intelligence challenges.

The PMG is devoted to exploring creative and alternative methods to enhance current processes in order to identify future threats and seize discreet opportunities to prevent strategic surprise.



The PMG's over all goal is to become an umbrella and catalyst organization to promote related work in this area. The Group's focus areas are listed below:

- Educational Exercises/Experiential Learning. This area examines course work, computer assisted learning, role playing games and simulations that incorporate Proteus Insights (PI) on "critical and out of the box" thinking
- Analysis and Decision Support. This area looks at the application of PI in intelligence analysis, decision making and planning processes at the strategic and operational levels.
- Future Research and Publication. This area will promote the study into new Proteus related insights, refine/develop current insights and work on future Proteus applications for identifying future threats and capitalizing on opportunities.

**Proteus Insights.** The resulting insights, from the Proteus book and outlined below, focus on a new way to consider problem sets and future scenarios. The 10 "insights" (original nine, plus one) point toward a new way of considering unintended consequences and understanding possible cascading effects of strategic decisions; either commercial, diplomatic or military. These insights can be used as a set of lenses to view future issues through a different mindset, to consider issues through a different value set and to think creatively, not traditionally. They can be helpful in framing complex strategic problems and developing holistic solution sets, and can assist in understanding the characteristics of the future environment, the actors, their attributes, where they act and how they interact. The Proteus insights and lenses have not only emerged as applicable to future planning and analysis for intelligence, but also for strategic and operational planners and decision makers within the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental and Multinational (JIIM) environment when considering the application of all elements of national power.

- Starlight: Foresight and Uncertainty Management. The global balance of political, economic, military, and cultural power will be capable of being quickly and significantly altered.
- Sanctuary: They Can Run and They *Can* Hide. "Sanctuary" is a way of thinking about information access. The need for secrecy increases rather than decreases and there will be more things of value that people will want to hide, but more entities will be interested in hiding them. The future will be an increasingly secretive place.
- Sweat the Small Stuff: Cyber Beings, Biotech, Nanotech. Instruments of power and sources of threat will come in smaller and smaller packages -- but with no lessening in lethality.



- Veracity: The Challenge of Truth and Knowledge. Truth & knowledge are not as absolute and fixable as previously believed.
- Power: The Shadows in Plato's Cave. The nature and/or distribution of power changed in significant ways. As values changed, there was an alteration in both power and the instruments of power.
- Wealth: It's Not Just Money. The foundations of wealth and the concept of highly liquid and fungible assets included non-traditional "currencies" (e.g., knowledge, safety, health, personal networks)
- Herds: People and Ideas on the Move. Emerging power and influence of non-traditional global organizations is not the issue that matters. What matters is the underlying "movement" of people and ideas.
- A Parallel Universe: From Networks to Cyber Life. The Internet is a river of wealth and power. Where it flows, "haves" arise; where it does not, "have-nots" arise.
- Bedfellows: The Significance of Teaming. The significance of teaming increases as global complexity is accelerating even where the US is disengaging. Intelligence and security demand agility and new partners internationally in diversified arenas of information, access and alliance.
- Threat and Opportunity Threat is omni present in the world. The obverse of threat is always someone else's opportunity.

**Planes of Influence.** The original Proteus workshop teams identified five planes of influence. These are places in which future friendly, hostile or neutral actors and things influence others and are acted upon. Key to this concept is not only to identify these places but to finitely analyze actor attributes and discreet interrelationships. The planes are similar to those domains used in Network Centric Warfare (NCW) and are outlined below:

- Terrestrial: The Classic military and geopolitical domains of land air sea as well as the physical concentrations of wealth (i.e., sea lanes, oil fields)
- Space: The domain of satellites and future space platforms
- Spectral: The electromagnetic spectrum where EW, bandwidth, frequency management and sensing occur
- Virtual: The global world of networks and connectivity
- Psychological: The Media and info conduits used to influence the hearts and minds of people

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